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WITH KIND REGARDS
OF THE AUTHOR.

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AN IDEAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

DELTA SIGMA SOCIETY OF McGILL UNIVERSITY,

DECEMBER, 1894.

1894

[FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.]

THOUGHTS ON AN IDEAL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN.

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BY

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MISS CAMERON AND LADIES :—

In response to your kind invitation to deliver this annual lecture, I have thought it proper to direct your attention to some points in the past, the present, and the future, which appear to be important in connection with this great work of the higher education of women in which we are all so deeply interested.

About 1294 B.C. or 3188 years ago, was produced the earliest known literary composition which we can refer to a woman's pen. It is a lyrical poem of one hundred lines, written by a Hebrew prophetess who dwelt under a palm tree on Mt. Ephraim, and ruled Israel in her day. As transmitted to our time in the book of Judges, it has continued to be read and to attract earnest attention, and has had a host of commentators and translators in modern times. It is now almost universally admitted to be of the antiquity it claims, and as entitled to take its place in the front rank of Hebrew song. One of its most learned students has said of this song of Deborah that "her strains are bold, varied and sublime. She is everywhere full of abrupt and impassioned appeals and personifications. She bursts away from earth to heaven and again returns to human things. She touches now upon the present, now dwells

upon the past, and closes with the grand promise and result of all prophecy and of all God's dealings in Providence :— "

> " So perish all thine enemies
> O ! Jehovah,
> But they that love thee are as the sun
> going forth in his strength."

The style and diction of the poem are naturally archaic in the extreme, and to the literary men of the later days of the Hebrew Monarchy it may have been in this respect what Chancer is to us. Hence it has proved very difficult to do justice to it in translation ; and in English we have only one or two translations at all tolerable.

Deborah is said in the English version to have been the wife of Lepidoth ; but as the word for wife is the same in the original with that for woman, and as *lepidoth* means lights or torches, while nothing is said in the story of either a person or place named Lepidoth, it has been held with some reason that the words mean " woman of lights," or as we would say " an enlightened woman." In this case " *Ashath Lepidoth* " may be regarded rather as official or educational —her university degree in short ; and if in the latter day we should have a Hebrew University for women, this degree of A.L. might be a very appropriate one. It was certainly very well fitted for Deborah, and should apply to every university graduate. I may illustrate these points by noticing shortly Deborah's opportunities and acquirements in that remote time in which she lived, as illustrated by the terms of her song. Not only the poem itself but some minute touches which it contains throw an instructive light on these points. In enumerating the tribes which took part in the struggle for freedom which she celebrates, Zebulon is said, among other things, to have sent men who could " handle the pen of the writer "—literally the "stylus of the scribe." The translators of our old version, following the Hebrew, the septuagint and the old versions generally, have so rendered the words. But in the meantime certain German critics, having proved to their own satisfaction that the art of writing was not known so early as the time of the Judges, had translated the words by the " staff of the leader " and similar phrases. This has been followed in the revised version, where we read " the marshall's baton." But there was no need of this cowardly compliance with German authority. We have now the most certain evidence that

writing was practised throughout Palestine centuries before the time of Deborah, and that the Israelites of her time must have had the choice of two or three kinds of writing as well as of various writing materials, among others the clay tablet and stylus to which she refers. How Zebulon should come to be eminent in this matter we can easily understand. His territory lay between the lake of Gennesaret and the Bay of Acre. He held the outlet to the sea from the fertile interior plains, and therefore was concerned with shipping and the trade with Phenicia. Probably therefore the people of this tribe were more advanced in literary as well as commercial matters than the other tribes. But what had this to do with the victory which the poem records? Scribes could enrol the volunteers. Scribes could keep accounts and manage the commissariat and the distribution of the spoil. Scribes could write urgent letters to the tribal chiefs to gather them to the battle. Scribes could record the victory in writings more enduring than brass or marble. All these things scribes had been doing for centuries in Egypt, out of which the Israelites had so lately come. Where there are scribes there must be books and schools, and Deborah herself may have received some of her enlightenment in the schools of Zebulon where she may have learned to write with the stylus on clay or with the reed pen on parchment or on papyrus, the old Hebrew or Phenician character or the cuneiform syllabary of Chaldea or the pictorial hieroglyphs of Egypt.

Her literary taste may have been cultivated by reading the works of still older historians and poets,—the Books of Moses, the Book of Jasher, the Book of the Wars of the Lord; perhaps even the Chaldean Epic of Isdubar or the poem of Pentaur in honor of the victories of Rameses over the Hittites, or the proverbs of the ancient Egyptian Sage Ptah-hotep or even the story of Job. These may have been in the libraries of Zebulon and open to her study. There were also large fields for education in the laws of her own people, as well as in the mathematics and chemistry and art of Egypt. She must also have learned something of the astronomy and natural science of Chaldea, else how could she have known that the stars had anything to do with the floods of the River Kishon, or that, while the ordinary rains of Palestine come from the west, the great storms or cyclones make their way up from Arabia

on the south. Evidently also she noted for herself the aspects of nature in a country more varied in its climate, resources and productions than any other of equal area. To what extent Deborah had availed herself of these advantages we do not know, but it is certain that she came out as an eminently pious and spiritually-minded, patriotic and courageous woman, a poetess of no mean power, yet a woman of affairs, an adviser, guide and authority on law, politics and war. It was not necessary for such a woman to contend for the "rights" of her sex. These came as a spontaneous tribute to her own worth. It was her mission to contend for the deliverance of a whole people, and to give to Israel peace and prosperity for forty years. She was an ideal woman, a wonderful product of divine gifts and graces, and of the training of a period whose civilization we often underrate. I have introduced her to you to-day to impress upon you the fact that such women are at once the sources and the products of the ideal education, the ideal society and the ideal nation, and that the great work of training women for high social and public positions has been carried on in one form or another from the earliest times.

Deborah heads a long procession of wise, learned and gifted women, which stretches down through classical, mediæval and modern times; women who, under various degrees of disadvantage, made themselves mothers in Israel in their time, and left their impress on the present and the future. I can myself remember how much I owed in early days to the writings of such women as Hannah More, Mrs. Sherwood and Miss Edgeworth, who did so much to redeem men from the comparative barbarism of the early part of this century, and to prepare the way for that great extension of the influence of women which we witness in our time, and of which our women's colleges are at onee a cause and an indication. When I look back on the rapid increase of the influence of women in education, in the course of my own experience, I am astonished at the change. Thirty or forty years ago the position of women as educators was mostly in the lowest ranks of the profession, and their number was comparatively small. Now they have advanced to some of the highest educational positions, and they fill the great majority of the ordinary schools. This great movement is still proceeding, and constitutes one of the most hopeful features in modern society. All over North

America at this moment the elementary education of boys as well as of girls is in the hands of educated women, and they are rapidly, and with the best results, taking their place in the higher institutions as well, and in the management of educational affairs. Their success in this highest department of work is a great compensation for any less opportunity to enter into those profeseions which men may be disposed to retain as their special prerogative. That this great movement may be promoted and regulated, it becomes daily more necessary that there should be ideal colleges for women, and that these should be in a position to attain to their full development without being trammelled with the disabilities and limitations whieh have heretofore attended the colleges for men.

I have visited many colleges for women on both sides of the Atlantic and have noted their peculiarities. They may be arranged roughly in two groups: (1) Those that like Wellesley, Vassar and Smith in the United States, and Cheltenham and Holloway in England, are wholly independent, and (2) those that like Girton and Newnham in England, and the Harvard Annex in the United States, and our own Donalda Special Course, are closely connected with universities, with which they may be said to be affiliated. I shall here select two, not as perfect realizations of the types to which they belong, but as approaching to this. They shall be Wellesley and Newnham, and I name these without any prejudice to other excellent colleges with which I am acquainted.

The first point that I shall notice is that our ideal college should approach the sacred character of a home. The home is now universally recognized, not only on religious, but scientific grounds, as the true root of all civilization. Man as a homeless wanderer would be a mere barbarian. The home and its surroundings and the influence of woman constitute the beginning and the end of the civilized arts and amenities of life.

At Wellesley the attempt to secure this refining influence has been made at great cost and with great care. The founder has provided his college with a wooded park of 300 acres near the village of Wellesley, about fifteen miles from Boston., including within its limits a beautiful little lake. On the rising ground fronting this lake stands the main building, palatial in form and dimensions, sumptuously furnished within, and in addition to the rooms for classes,

dining-room, reading-rooms, parlours, library and museum, providing 350 students each with a sleeping apartment and study-room looking out upon the park. Another fine building, almost equally well situated, but with single rooms, accommodates 107, and there are several cottages embowered in trees and gay with flowers and capable of lodging 230 students. No young women could have more beautiful surroundings, and as a matter of course they adorn their own rooms according to taste and means. Walks, drives, skating, boating and games are all provided for, and there is a gymnasium in which each student is scientifically tested on entrance, provided with exercises according to her health and strength and periodically guaged as to gain or loss of weight and power. It is scarcely necessary to say that there are competent hygienic officers to supervise all this. All students are required by turns to take part in the lighter domestic service, and there is besides a definite department of domestic economy and science with practical work, and there is a significant note that a knowledge of chemistry and physics is essential to students. I connect with this the course of physiology and hygiene, though at present it occupies only a subordinate place under the department of zoology. It should be a separate department and connected with instruction in nursing and household surgery. It is singular that in McGill we have not yet been able to provide a course of hygiene for women, though the Ladies' Association, which prepared the way for our college course, used to have good and well attended classes in this and in the elements of nursing and domestic surgery. These are arts which should be taught to all women, and the trained nurse of the present day is no substitute for this, since her services are too costly for all but the wealthy, and therefore inaccessible to many. The remedy lies with the colleges. They only can provide instructors who might make every woman a nurse and hygienic expert. One such skilled instructor is equal to an army of nurses.

In Newnham the arrangements are in many respects different, and bear the impress of its origin, in an association of friends of education, principally women, and bent on securing the largest amount of substantial education with the least expenditure. It originally occupied a large house, by the side of a highway in the suburbs of Cambridge, which was enlarged and adapted to its use.

The ground attached to this building being too small to admit of much extension, the College, as it grew, swarmed across the road and took possession of a second building. This was its condition for some time, in two "Halls," one under the care of the Principal, the late Miss Clough, and the other under Miss Helen Gladstone. A third Hall had to be subsequently added, and later the original buildings were connected by additional erections into one edifice. It would appear that further extension is now needed. Each student in Newnham has a single room, with a curtained recess for a bed. The rooms are small but neat, and most of them nicely decorated by their occupants, who dine together in their several halls, and have the advantage of study-rooms and of a small but select library. There are about eight acres of ground available for physical exercise, and a gymnasium. The favourite gemes are lawn-tennis, hockey and fives. Those students who attend lectures in Cambridge have the benefit of a long walk in all weathers, for which they provide themselves with suitable garments and thick-soled boots. There are several clubs—literary, scientific, musical, and even political,—and much informal social intercourse. It is pleasant to know that it is a tradition of the place that the senior students are expected to show kind and friendly attention to the juniors, and to make them feel at home in the college.

Passing now from the primary requirements of the home life to those for the University degree, Newnham bases its course on that of the University of Cambridge, and brings up its students to the standard of the B. A., in most cases with honour studies as well, though the University, while admitting them to the examinations, declines to recognize them as undergraduates, and to grant them the degree they have earned. There is something pathetic in this injustice, and in the meekness with which it has been borne. Year by year the women have gone up for the same examinations with the men, and have proved themselves their equals, even in the mathematical tripos, but they have been denied the distinction for which they have worked so well, though the University cannot refuse to grant its certificates of passing and honours. Yet the women have their revenge, for the policy of exclusion has caused it to come to pass that instead of falling into the position of mere partial students, they go up for honours and take them, so that all the world

knows that the average standing of the women is higher than that of the men, and that the greater number of the men who go out with the poll B. A. are inferior to the women who receive no degree. Even in institutions so conservative as the English universities, the absurdity of this will before long become too evident to permit its continuance. In the mean time the women are patient and bide their time, and are content with the substance without the title.

Wellesley being an independent college with university powers, gives its own degrees. Its course of study is modelled on that of Harvard, and it is sufficient to say that it is equal to that of the great New England university. It has been, however, more conservative in having a larger number of "required" or imperative subjects, but has lately extended its freedom of choice. The student must take, in four years, fifty-nine one-hour courses of lectures or their equivalent. Of these twenty-six are "required" and the rest are "elective," and the whole is managed in such a manner that the student must, especially in the junior years, take some scientific and some literary work, much on the plan we have pursued in McGill. The staff includes no less than eighty professors, instructors and assistants, enabling efficient instruction to be given over a very wide range of subjects, and the college is provided with its own museum, laboratories and library. Its number of students exceeds 700.

It is worthy of notice that Weliesley, after following the doubtful example of many universities in offering distinct degrees in Arts and Sciences, a course which here we have always declined to adopt, has now dropped the degree of B. S. and offers the degree of B. A. alone, though allowing the largest options in favour of Science in the advanced years of the course for B. A. The hope is expressed in the last report of the Council that this will add strength and practical educational value to the course of study. It is certainly a distinct advance in favour of thoroughness in a truly liberal education, and leaves, as with us, applied science to the properly technical schools, which may, moreover, in process of time be added to the college for women as distinct faculties or departments, in so far as such education may be required.

Girton and Newnham and the Harvard Annex, owing to their connection with universities, require only a small number of teachers. Newnham, with about one hundred and fifty students, has only

eleven resident instructors, all ladies, while it employs forty of the university professors, tutors and lecturers to come out and deliver leetures in the college itself. In addition to this, the lectures of many of the professors in the university are open to the honour students of the college. The ordinary work is thus done wholly in the college itself, by teachers specially engaged, and for this purpose the college has chemical, physical and physiological laboratories on its own grounds. There is a great economy in this university connection, as the women can have the benefit of all the university appliances and of the teaching of such members of the university staff as they think proper to employ, without the expense of duplicating all this for themselves. Such economy naturally commends itself where, as in England, the colleges for women have grown from the spontaneous efforts of associations of ladies, and the same reason applies in this country; though in the United States, where very great private endowments have been available, it has been largely set aside in favour of the independent system. It is also true that as the English colleges have grown in wealth and number of students, they have shown a tendency to increase their staff and provide apparatus and laboratories of their own. If we ask for educational rather than financial reasons for the difference, they are to be found in the following considerations :

First, An independent college for women has naturally a preponderance of lady professors, who, other things being equal, are better fitted for the work. In Wellesley only eight out of eighty are men, and out of twenty nine professors and associate professors the whole, with one exception, are women. Employment is also afforded in this way to the abler graduates of the college, and they are fitted for work elsewhere.

A second reason for the preference of independence is to enable the college to emancipate itself from many trammels of the olden time which bind the education of men. These are partly inheritances from mediæval times, partly requirements of professional Boards, partly mere prejudices in favor of certain studies as more especially suitable for men. At first, in the matter of college education, the women desired precisely the same education with that given to their brothers; but experience has shown that many improvements may be made.

A third reason is that the independent college can grow by the addition to itself of professional departments adapted to women, with greater facility than that with which this can be done in association with an old and conservative university. In this connection Wellesley has already developed a school of practical chemistry, a school of political science and constitutional law and political economy, a school of practical astronomy and meteorology, a school of pedagogics and didactics, a school of music and a school of art, rhe two latter having large and suitable buildings for themselves. Professional training can thus be easily grafted on the system of an independent college, provided that means can be secured.

The chief disability of such a college is that its degeee is liable to be less esteemed than that of the older and greater universities, and here the independent college would approach nearer to our ideal were it to send up its students, as Vassar now does, to the regular university examinations, retaining to itself merely the graduation in such special or professional departments as might not be provided for by the University. It is worthy of note here that in colleges of both types the greater number of the students are undergraduates, though in Cambridge not reckoned as such. At Newnham and Girton, all, with very few exceptions, are regular students, most of them taking honor studies. At Wellesley, of 731 students, 661 are undergraduates. In McGill the proportion of undergraduates has, as we know, been steadily increasing. I feel convinced that with a building of its own, and a more distinctively collegiate character, our Donalda special course would soon double its number of undergraduate students.

I have already hinted that the ideal college for women might attain to a higher and better standard than that which has been usual in colleges for men. Girton and Newnham, from the first, showed their ambition in this respect by enjoining on their students the propriety of entering for honour studies. This at once placed them on a higher plane of special study, and one sees that in the Tripos examinations they have distributed themselves over all the principal subjects in which honours are offered by the university. As they have to pass the matriculation, and must have passed also in either the higher local examinations or the previous examination of the

university, it is evident that this gives them a high educational standing.

Wellesley secures a similar result by its system of imperative and elective studies. We may take for an example tts treatment of the subject of languages. In the matriculation examination a good knowledge of Latin is required, and Greek, French and German are linked together, so that two must be taken and one of them with a high or maximum standard. There is also a high standard in English. Instruction is given in Spanish and Italian and to a limited extent in Hebrew and Sanscrit, but of course without any requirement at marticulation. Of all these languages the only one imperative is English. A certain amount of the others is required, but the particular language is a matter of choice. Latin being imperative for matriculation, of course has the advantage over Greek, yet in the reports of elective studies it does not retain this preference, though it is not neglected. It would seem that the actual choice of students is in the following proportions :—

German	292
English Literature	257
Greek	153
French	143
Latin	85

Thus the students recognize the superior importance of Greek ; and this is, perhaps, partly dependent on the fact that not merely the language, but the literature, the art, the social life of the Greeks are included in the course, and that attention is given to the critical study of the peculiar orientalized Greek of the Septuaglnt and the New Testament. Much, no doubt, also depends on the daily growing importance of Greek as the language of science, and the students are also much influenced by the great fact that it has pleased God to give us in this finest of the European languages the original documents of our holy faith. Hebrew has hardly yet taken its place in the colleges for women, yet it has great claims of a philological kind as a Semitic tongue, and it has still higher claims as the vehicle of our Old Testament Scriptures, the most important to us of all the literature of that ancient world which preceded the classical

times, and is in these last days so growing in importance in the light of modern discovery. It is natural, however, that in a college for women the first places should be taken by English and modern languages, and that these should be taught iu a manner to be practically useful in speaking and writing. The women's college for the future will, in any case, take a way of its own in linguistic studies, and there is evidence in the Wellesley list that it will cultivate thoroughly our own language, will reverse the old preference of Latin to Greek, that it will not neglect the science of philology, and will drink deeply of the well of literature, sacred and secular, ancient and modern.

At Wellesley, mathematics, philosophy, physiology and hygiene, natural science and the English Bible are, up to a certain point, required subjects, but there are also higher or elective studies, and here philosophy and history stand first in number of students, while natural sciences also attract many students, botany taking the lead. History of art, higher mathematics, political economy, elocution, and the art of teaching have also some votaries. In natural science the course seems to be of a full and attractive character, and less of that narrowly anatomical style, which of late has been too common in the biological studies of our schools and colleges.

In Newnham, as befits the atmosphere of an English university, the mathematical tripos and the classical tripos are about equal in their number of students, and take leading places, but natural sciences stand equal to either of them, and history, moral sciences and modern languages follow at no great distance. In point of fact, but for the dominance of mathematics at Cambridge, the drift of the women's selection would not be very far removed from that of Wellesley. The lists of both show the tendency of the ideal woman's college to mark out a somewhat new and improved educational course.

I have already intimated that in our independent woman's college unfettered by cast-iron university requirements, the study of the Old and New Testament holds a high place. The course of study marked out for these in Wellesley, whether in the English Bible or in the original languages, is copious and excellent, and in great part it is imperative, though there are extensive elective courses for the advanced years. The whole course is fitted to give a clear and connected view of revelation as a whole, and as the development of the

divine plan of salvation. Its value must be great in an educational point of view, but still greater as giving a christian woman a clear perception of the essentials of Christianity, and enabling her to meet the tendencies to superstition on the one hand and infidelity on the other, with a clear and reasoned faith. Wellesley, though giving a high place to Scriptural studies, is not denominational. Its students belong to sixteen denominations and five sevenths of them are church members. They have a Christian Association with 416 members, which carries on missionary work both at home and abroad.

We cannot pursue these comparisons farther. They now lead us to inquire whether we may not be able here to combine the advantages of both the types of colleges above sketched. With the farther aid of our honoured Chancellor, who, in 1884, enabled us to institute the Donalda special course, who, in his deed of gift, provided for its establishment as soon as possible as "a separate college of McGill University with a separate building," and who has already taken important steps towards the erection of the "Royal Victoria College for Women," we may yet see established in Montreal a college absolutely independent in all but university powers, and enjoying at the same time the whole of the benefits derivable from the appliances of the university, and from the teaching of the eminent specialists it may gather around it. Thus we have, even in our little Donalda special course, the germ of an ideal college for women. It is towards this consummation that we have been labouring for the last ten years, and to which we look forward with faith and hope. In the meantime it is our duty loyally and patiently to uphold the good we have, and to trust that before long our visions of better things will be realized in the erection of a model college, honourable to Montreal and giving to students all that can be desired in home and social life, and with facilities for study not heretofore enjoyed in this country—a college the pride of all the friends of education, worthy of the patronage of our Visitor, as the representative of her most gracious Majesty, and deserving the proud title of "Royal Victoria."

For myself, ever since in 1870 a noble band of women, several of whom I am happy to see here to-day, established in this city the Ladies' Educational Association, this vision of a college for

women in connection with the university has been before my mind. I welcomed with gratitude its partial realization under the endowment of Sir Donald Smith, and have laboured earnestly to carry out his wise and liberal intentions. If now, in the good providence of God, I am not to take part in the full realization of my ideal, if this happiness has been denied to me, I at least have the satisfaction of having gathered some material for the temple whieh others are to build—of seeing, afar off, the good land on the possession of which you and your successors are soon to enter.

I join with you in the expression of regret that the sad national bereavement which we all deplore, has prevented us from being honored on this occasion with the presence of Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen, who takes so lively an interest in all that concerns the true elevation of woman.